THE

SHIPWRECK:

OR,

PAUL AND MARY.

VOL. I.

BRITISH MUSEUM
30 70
OCT

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AN

INDIAN TALE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PAUL AND MARY.

CHAP. I.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLE OF FRANCE.

ON the eaſtern ſide of the mountain which riſes behind Port Louis, in the Iſle of France, may be ſeen, upon a little ſpot, formerly cultivated, the ruins of two ſmall cottages. They are ſituated almoſt in the midſt of a baſon, formed by great rocks, with only one opening towards the north. From this aperture, towards the left, riſes, to view, the

mountain called, by the natives, Le Morne de la de Couverte, whence the ſignal is given when any veſſel arrives at the iſle; and at the foot of this mountain appears the town called Port Louis; upon the right, the road which leads from Port Louis to the dwellings of the Pamplemouſes; near the ſame ſpot the church of that name, which is ſituated, ſurrounded by bamboo walks, in the middle of a great plain; and a little farther, a great foreſt, which extends to the extremities of the iſland. Straight forward may be ſeen Tomb Bay; towards the right the Unfortunate Cape; and beyond that, the high ſea, in which appears, level with the water, ſeveral little iſlands; amongſt others, the Coin de Mire, which reſembles a baſtion in the midſt of the waves.

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At the entrance to this baſon, whence ſo many objects are perceived, the echoes of the mountain inceſſantly repeat the roaring of the winds, which agitate the neighbouring foreſts, and the daſhing of the waves, which break at a diſtance on the ragged cliffs; but where thoſe cottages are ſituated, all is ſtill; no winds are heard, and nought but ſteep rocks meet the gazing eye on every ſide. Several cluſters of trees grow at their feet, in their chinks, and even on their ſummits, which ſeem to prop the pending clouds. The rains, which their towering heads attract, frequently tinge their ruſſet ſides with the colours of the rainbow, and ſwell the ſmall rivulet which flows beneath.

In this retired ſpot formerly dwelt two families, whoſe ſingular hiſtory, as related by a venerable old man in the iſland, is as follows.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE HISTORY OF MADAM DE LA TOUR AND MARGARET.

IN the year 1735, a young man, of Normandy, whoſe name was De la Tour, after having ſolicited, in vain, for employment in the ſervice of France, and after repeated refuſals of aſſiſtance from his family, formed the reſolution of repairing to this iſland, to obtain that ſubſiſtence which his country and rela-

tives denied him. He brought with him a young woman, whom he tenderly loved, and who mutually returned his affection. She was of an ancient and reſpectable houſe in Normandy, but he had married her privately, and without any portion, on account of the oppoſition made by her relations to her marriage. He left her at Port Louis, in this iſland, and embarked for Madagaſcar, with the view of purchaſing a few ſlaves, and quickly returning to form a plantation. He left Madagaſcar about the middle of October; and, a ſhort time after his departure, he died of a peſtilential fever, which rages in thoſe parts ſix months in the year, and which prevents the Europeans from making any fixed ſettlements. His effects were quickly embezzled, as it frequently happens

to

to thoſe who die out of their country. His wife remained in the iſle of France, a widow, and pregnant; her whole fortune being but one negro woman, in a country where ſhe had neither credit or recommendation. Not willing, therefore, to lay herſelf under obligation to any man, after the death of him who entirely poſſeſſed her affection, her misfortunes gave her courage, and ſhe reſolved to cultivate, with her ſlave, a ſmall ſpot of ground for their ſupport.

In an almoſt deſolate iſland, the ground of which was free, ſhe choſe not the moſt fertile, nor the moſt favourable for trade; but walking on the neck of the mountain, in ſearch of a ſecret aſylum, where ſhe might live ſingle and unknown, ſhe at length came to theſe rocks.

'Tis an inſtinct common to all ſenſible and ſuffering beings, to take refuge in the moſt wild and uncultivated places; as if rocks were ramparts againſt misfortune, or that the calm of nature could ſtill the troubles of the ſoul. But Providence, whoſe bounty ſupplies thoſe wants which are neceſſary, had reſerved for Madame de la Tour, what neither riches or grandeur can give—'Twas a friend!

In this place, for upwards of a year, had dwelt an amiable and ſenſible woman, named Margaret. She was born in Britanny, of a plain country family, by whom ſhe was beloved; and might have remained happy in her own country, if ſhe had not placed too much confidence in the love of a gentleman, who had promiſed

promiſed her marriage; but who, after having ſatisfied his brutal appetite, abandoned her, without even making any proviſion for the infant with whom he had left her pregnant. She was, therefore, determined to quit, for ever, the village in which ſhe was born, and to go and conceal her ſhame in the colonies, far from her country, where ſhe had loſt the only portion of a poor and virtuous girl, her reputation. An old black man, ſhe had purchaſed with a trifle ſhe had borrowed, cultivated, with her, a ſmall ſpot of this mountain. Madame de la Tour, followed by her negro woman, found Margaret in this place, ſuckling her infant. She was happy to find a woman in a poſition, which indicated ſhe was what ſhe herſelf expected to be. She diſcourſed with her, in a few words, upon

upon her paſt condition, and of her preſent diſtreſs. Margaret, at the recital of the misfortunes of Madam de la Tour, was moved with pity, and wiſhing to gain her confidence, rather than her eſteem, owned to her, without diſguiſing any thing, the imprudence of which ſhe had been guilty. "For my part, (ſaid ſhe,) I have "merited my lot: but you, Madam, "you,—prudent and unhappy!"—and ſhe offered her, weeping, her friendſhip and cottage. Madam de la Tour, affected by a reception ſo tender, ſaid to her, embracing her, "Ah! God will put an end to my "afflictions, ſince he inſpires you "with more goodneſs towards me, "who am a ſtranger to you, than "ever I experienced from my rela-"tions."

I knew

I knew Margaret, ſaid the old man, (who related the ſtory;) and though I dwell a league and a half from this ſpot, in the wood, behind the long mountain, I always looked upon myſelf as her neighbour. In the cities of Europe, a ſtreet, a ſimple wall, may hinder relations from aſſembling together, perhaps, for whole years; but, in newly planted colonies, we look upon perſons, whom only woods and mountains ſeparate, as our friends. In the time when this iſle carried on but little commerce with the Indies, a ſimple neighbourhood in it, intitled ſtrangers to hoſpitality and friendſhip, and we looked upon it as a duty and pleaſure.

When I firſt learned my neighbour had a companion, I immediately endeavoured

endeavoured to be of uſe to them both. When I viſited them, I beheld, in Madame de la Tour, a perſon of an intereſting figure, full of nobleneſs; but a tinge of melancholy was in her countenance. Her time of delivery drew near; as it was before obſerved, her huſband left her pregnant. I told them they ought, for the ſake of their children, and to prevent any other perſon from ſettling, to divide between them this encloſure, which contained about twenty acres. They referred it to me to make this diviſion. I formed two portions nearly equal. The one contained the upper part of this encloſure, from that hollow of the rock (whence iſſues the ſource of the river Lataniers) to that ſteep opening of the mountain, which is called the Embraſure, becauſe it reſembles the

embraſure

embraſure of a battlement. The ground of that part is ſo filled with rocks and fiſſures, that it is difficult to walk on it: however, it produces large trees, and is well ſupplied with brooks and ſprings. In the other portion I included the whole of the lower part, which extends along the bank of the river Lataniers to this opening where we ſtand, whence this river begins to flow between two hills to the ſea. You here ſee, ſaid the old man, ſome remaining borders of the meadows, and a ſpot of ground which was compactly enclofed; but is not better than the other; for, in the rainy ſeaſon, it is marſhy; and in the dry, it is ſo hard, that, to open a trench in it, one muſt cut it with hatchets. I engaged the two females to draw lots. The upper part fell to Madame de la Tour,

Tour, the lower to Margaret. Each was contented with her lot; but they prayed me not to ſeparate their dwelling, "That we may (ſaid they) "be able to ſee, diſcourſe with, and "aſſiſt one another." However, I thought it more prudent that each ſhould have a ſeparate abode. The cottage of Margaret was ſituated in the midſt of the baſon, entirely within the limits of her own diviſion; and very near, upon the borders of the others portion, I built one for Madam de la Tour. So that theſe two friends were near neighbours, but yet upon their own ground. I myſelf cut their paliſades in the mountain: I procured the neceſſary materials for building their cottages, of which you now behold neither covering or door. Alas! there yet remains too much for my remembrance!

brance! Time, which ſo rapidly deſtroys the monuments of empires, ſeems to reſpect, in theſe deſerts, thoſe of friendſhip, to perpetuate my concern to the end of my life.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

RECIPROCAL AFFECTION.

THE big tear ſtole down the furrowed checks of this venerable old man, and he remained ſilent a while.—At length he reſumed his ſpeech, and thus continued: Scarcely were theſe two cottages finiſhed, when Madam de la Tour was delivered of a daughter. I had ſtood as godfather to the child of Margaret, who was called Paul.

Madam

Madam de la Tour alſo intreated me, jointly with her friend, to give a name to her daughter. Margaret gave her the name of Mary. "She "ſhall be virtuous, (ſaid ſhe,) ſhe "ſhall be happy: I have only "known misfortune in ceaſing to be "ſo."

When Madam de la Tour was recovered, thoſe two little habitations began to be quite convenient, by the aſſiſtance I gave from time to time, but more particularly by the aſſiduous labours of their ſlaves. That of Margaret was named Domingo. He was robuſt, although advanced in age; had experience, and good natural ſenſe. He cultivated, indifferently, the ſoil which was moſt fertile of either diviſion, and ſowed thoſe ſeeds in them which ſuited

them beſt. So that, in a ſhort time, their ground produced them every thing neceſſary for clothing and food. His leiſure time was employed in cutting fire wood in the mountain, and making their habitations more convenient and ſnug. In ſhort, he did every thing with activity and judgment, becauſe he did it with zeal. He was ſtrongly attached to Margaret: he was no leſs ſo to Madam de la Tour, whoſe negro woman he had married at the birth of Mary. He ſincerely loved his wife, whoſe name was Mary. She was born at Madagaſcar, where ſhe had learned to make baſkets, and ſeveral neceſſary things. She was very handy; but, above all, ſhe was faithful. Her department was in feeding the poultry, and other neceſſary animals, and going frequently to Port Louis,

to

to ſell the ſurplus of thoſe two little cottages, whoſe whole domeſtic ſtock conſiſted of the poultry above-mentioned, of two goats, and a large dog, which guarded their plantations by night.

The two friends ſpun cotton from morning to night, which was ſufficient for the ſupport of themſelves and families. But of ſome conveniencies they were ſo unprovided, that, within their habitations, they walked barefoot, and only wore ſhoes on a Sunday, when they went to the church of the Pamplemouſes, which you ſee at a diſtance. They ſeldom repaired to the town, for fear of being ridiculed, becauſe, like ſlaves, they were clothed in the coarſe blue cloth of Bengal. But is the public regard preferable to domeſtic happi-

neſs? If thoſe females ſuffered a little abroad, they returned to their habitations with ſo much more pleaſure. No ſooner did Domingo and Mary perceive them returning from church on a Sunday, than they ran to the foot of the mountain, to aſſiſt them in aſcending to their habitation. They could read in the eyes of their ſlaves, the joy they experienced at their return. In their own happy dwellings they could find property, liberty, neceſſaries, the fruits of their own labours, and ſervants full of zeal and affection. Themſelves, united by the ſame wants, having experienced the like misfortunes, in giving to each other the ſweet names of friend, companion, and ſiſter, had but one will, one intereſt, one table. Every thing they poſſeſſed was common. The latent ſparks of a former attachment,

attachment, more powerful than thoſe of friendſhip, rekindled in their ſouls a pure religion, which, aided by chaſte manners, directed them towards another life; like the flame which aſcends towards heaven, when deſtitute of aliment on earth.

The duties of nature added ſtill more to the happineſs of their ſociety. Their mutual friendſhip redoubled at the ſight of their children; fruits of an equally unfortunate love. They took pleaſure in putting them into the ſame bath, and laying them in the ſame cradle. Often would they exchange breaſts. "My "friend, (ſaid Madam de la Tour,) "each of us will have two children, "and each our children ſhall "have two mothers." Like as two ſhoots, that, remaining on two trees

of the ſame kind, after a ſtorm, hath rent all their branches, produce more delicious fruit, if detached from their maternal ſtock, and engrafted on each other; ſo theſe two little children, deprived of their parents, were filled with ſentiments more tender than thoſe of ſon, of daughter, of brother, or ſiſter, when they came to be changed from their maternal breaſt, by the two friends who had given them birth.

Already their mothers ſpoke of their marriage while in their infant cradles; and this proſpect of conjugal happineſs, by which they ſoothed their own ſorrows, very often concluded by exciting their tears: the one recalling to mind, that her misfortunes had happened from a too credulous attachment; the

the other by a precipitate marriage. The one reflecting in being brought up above her condition; the other, in being debaſed. But they comforted themſelves in hoping that, one day, their children, more fortunate, would, at once, enjoy, far from the cruel calumnies of Europe, the pleaſures of love, equality, and happineſs.

Nothing could be compared to the attachment they already manifeſted. If Paul wept, Mary was preſented to him; at ſight of her, he ſmiled, and was appeaſed. If Mary ſuffered, it ſoon was made known by the crying of Paul—But this amiable child concealed her uneaſineſs, that he might not feel a pain at the ſight.

CHAP. IV.

INNOCENCE.

I NEVER went thither (continued the old man) but I ſaw both of them quite naked, (according to the cuſtom of the country,) hardly able to walk, and holding each other's hands, like as painters repreſent the conſtellations of gemini.

Even night could not ſeparate them. They were frequently found lying

lying in the ſame cradle, their cheeks and their breaſts lying together, their hands mutually paſſed round each other's neck, and ſleeping in each other's arms.

When they were able to ſpeak, the firſt names they learned to call each other, were thoſe of brother and ſiſter. Infancy, which only experiences the tendereſt careſſes, could not point out names more endearing. Their education only redoubled their friendſhip, in directing it towards their reciprocal wants.

Soon, whatever concerned œconomy, property, or the decking out a rural feaſt, fell to the department of Mary; and her endeavours were always followed by the praiſes and kiſſes of her brother. As for Paul,

ever

ever in action, he dug the garden with Domingo; or, with a little hatchet in hand, followed him into the woods; and if, in his rambles, a beautiful flower, a delicate fruit, or a bird's neſt, offered themſelves, had they been even at the top of a tree, he would have climbed up to have brought them to his ſiſter.

When you met one, you might be ſure the other was not far. One day, as I was deſcending from the top of the mountain, I perceived Mary, who was at the extremity of the garden, running towards the houſe, her head covered with her petticoat, which ſhe had raiſed up behind to ſhelter her from a ſhower of rain. When, at a diſtance, I thought her alone, and having advanced towards her to aſſiſt her in walking, I ſaw ſhe had

had Paul by the arm, almoſt wrapped in the ſame covering; both laughing at their being ſheltered under an umbrella of their own invention. Thoſe two charming heads, encloſed under one extended petticoat, ſuggeſted to my mind the idea of the children of Leda encloſed in the ſame ſhell.

Their whole ſtudy was to pleaſe and aſſiſt one another. In other reſpects they were entirely ignorant, having not yet been taught the uſe of letters. They gave themſelves no concern about what paſſed in times remote from their own: their curioſity extended not to the other ſide of the mountain: they thought the boundaries of their iſland were the ends of the world; and imagined that nothing could be beautiful, but in the ſpot where they reſided. Their mutual

mutual affection, and that of their mothers, poſſeſſed the whole of their ſoul. Never had they been wearied by the gloomy leſſons of a gloomy morality, nor had needleſs ſciences made their tears flow. They knew not that there was ſuch a prohibition as, "Thou ſhalt not ſteal;" becauſe, with them, every thing was common. They were ſtrangers to intemperance, having ſimple food at diſcretion. Lying was not found on their lips, having no truth to diſſemble. Never had they been terrified by a recital of the puniſhments reſerved for the wicked: with them, filial love was born from maternal friendſhip. They had only been taught ſo much of religion as to make them love it; and if they offered not long prayers in the church, yet, where ever they were, in the houſe,

houſe, in the fields, or the woods, they raiſed towards heaven their innocent hands, with hearts full of the love of their parents.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE UNNATURAL RELATIVE.

THUS paſſed their infant years, like the beautiful dawn, which announces a more beautiful day. Already did they ſhare with their mothers the care of the family. As ſoon as the crowing of the cock announced the return of the morn, Mary aroſe, and went to draw water from the neighbouring ſpring, and returned to prepare the family breakfaſt.

faſt. When the ſun began to dart his rays within this encloſure, Margaret, and her ſon, repaired to Madame de la Tour; then all together joined in a prayer, before they ſat down to their morning repaſt. A wholeſome and plentiful way of living, had conſiderably aided the growth of the two young perſons; and a mild education painted in their countenances the purity and content of their ſouls.

Mary was no more than twelve years of age: already was ſhe above half grown: long flaxen locks ſhaded her ſhoulders: her blue eyes, and coral lips, add d an unſpeakable grace to her blooming countenance: they ſmiled ever in concert when ſhe ſpoke; but when ſhe kept ſilence, their natural obliquity towards heaven,

ven, gave them an expreſſion of extreme ſenſibility, bordering almoſt upon a ſlight melancholy.

In Paul, the character of man was already developed amidſt the graces of youth. He was taller than Mary, his complexion browner, his noſe more aquiline; and his black eyes would have ſent forth a look of loftineſs, if his long laſhes, which ſhaded them round, had not given them the greateſt mildneſs. Though he was ever in motion, yet, when his ſiſter appeared, he was tranquil, and ſeated himſelf by her. Oft' did their meals paſs without ſpeaking a word. By their ſilence, the ſimplicity of their attitude, and the beauty of their naked feet, you would have imagined you ſaw a group of ancient marble repreſenting the children

of Niobe. But, by their looks, which inceſſantly met each other; by their ſmiles, produced by ſmiles more ſoft on the other ſide, you would have taken them for children of heaven, for bleſſed ſpirits, whoſe nature is to love one another, who have no need to make known their ſentiments by thoughts, or their friendſhip by words.

However, Madam de la Tour, when ſhe obſerved the beauty of her daughter unfold with ſo many charms, felt her uneaſineſs increaſe with her tenderneſs. Often would ſhe ſay to me, (ſaid the old man,) "If I ſhould die, what would be-come of Mary without a fortune?" She had, in France, an aunt, a lady of quality, rich, old, and ſuperſti-tious, who harſhly refuſed her aſſiſ-

tance when ſhe married M. de la Tour. She had, therefore, reſolved, what ever might be her diſtreſs, never to have recourſe to her. But being become a mother, ſhe no longer dreaded the ſhame of a refuſal. She informed her aunt, by letter, of the unexpected death of her huſband, the birth of her daughter, and the diſtreſs ſhe was in, far from her country, deſtitute of ſupport, and burthened with a child. She received no anſwer. Madam de la Tour, who was of a lofty diſpoſition, now was no longer aſhamed of humbling herſelf, or of expoſing herſelf to the reproaches of a relation, who had not forgiven her having married a man without birth, though virtuous. She wrote to her every opportunity, to excite her ſenſibility in favour of Mary. But ſeveral years had elapſed without

without having received any mark of attention.

At length, in the year 1746, upon the arrival of M. de la Bourdonaye, ſhe learnt that the new governor had brought a letter from her aunt. She ran to Port Louis, without once being aſhamed of her coarſe cloathing: maternal joy overcame human reſpect. M. de la Bourdonaye did, indeed, give her a letter from her aunt. She obſerved to her niece, that ſhe merited her misfortunes, in having married an adventurer and libertine; that her raſh love met with its puniſhment; and her huſband's death was a juſt chaſtiſement from God; that ſhe had well done in going to the iſles, rather than diſhonour her family in France; that, after all, ſhe was in a good country,

where every body made a fortune except the idle. After having thus blamed her niece, ſhe concluded by praiſing herſelf. " To avoid (ſaid " ſhe) the melancholy conſequences " of wedlock, I have ever refuſed to " marry." The truth was, that being ambitious, ſhe was deſirous of eſpouſing a man of quality; but, though ſhe was rich, and in a court where ſcarcely any thing is regarded but fortune, yet could ſhe find no perſon who was willing to join himſelf to a perſon ſo ugly, or a heart ſo obdurate.

She added, in the poſtſcript, that every conſideration being made, ſhe had ſtrongly recommended her to M. de la Bourdonaye. She had, indeed, recommended her; but, according to a cuſtom very common in the

the preſent day, which renders a protector more to be feared than an open enemy: in order to juſtify, to the governor, her cruelty towards her niece, in pretending to pity her, ſhe had calumniated her.

Madam de la Tour, whom no indifferent man could look upon without concern and reſpect, was received with great coolneſs by M. de la Bourdonaye, who was already prepoſſeſſed againſt her. He only anſwered the petition, preſented in behalf of herſelf and daughter, by cruel half expreſſions. "I ſhall "ſee——We ſhall ſee——In good "time——There are many unfor-"tunate perſons——But why trouble "a reſpectable aunt?——'Tis you "who are in fault."

Madam de la Tour returned to her habitation, her heart wounded with grief, and full of bitterneſs. As ſoon as ſhe arrived, ſhe ſeated herſelf, threw upon the table her aunt's letter, and ſaid to her friend, " There's the fruit of eleven years " patience." But as no one, except Madam de la Tour, in the whole family, could read, ſhe took it up again, and read it to all. Scarcely had ſhe finiſhed, when Margaret briſkly replied, " What need have " you of relations? God hath not " forſaken us. 'Tis he alone who is " our father. Have we not lived " happy hitherto? Why are you " uneaſy? You have no courage." But ſeeing Madam de la Tour weep, ſhe threw herſelf upon her neck, and embracing her in her arms, " My " dear friend, (cried ſhe,) my dear " friend!"

" friend!" But her ſobs ſtopt her voice. At this ſight Mary burſting into tears, preſſed alternatively the hands of her mother and Margaret to her mouth and her heart; and Paul, his eyes inflamed with rage, cried out, doubled his fiſts, and ſtamped his feet, imagining that ſomebody had offered her violence. At this noiſe Domingo and Mary ran thither, and nothing was to be heard in the cottage but cries of diſtreſs: " Ah Madam!——My good " miſtreſs! —— My mother! —— " weep not." Such tender marks of friendſhip diſſipated the uneaſineſs of Madam de la Tour. She took Paul and Mary in her arms, and ſaid to them, with an air of ſatisfaction, " My children, you are the " cauſe of my uneaſineſs; but you are " alſo the cauſe of my happineſs.

" Oh! my dear children, misfortune " hath only came from far, but here " I am encircled with happineſs." Mary and Paul comprehended her not; but when they ſaw her tranquil, they ſmiled, and began to careſs her. Thus they all continued to be happy; and this was only like a ſtorm, which unexpectedly happens in a calm ſerene day.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE HUMANITY OF MARY.

THE humanity of the two children diſcovered itſelf in very ſtrong colours from day to day. One Sunday, at ſun riſe, when their mothers were gone to prayers in the church of the Pamplemouſes, a negro woman, who had fled from the ill treatment of her maſter, preſented herſelf among the ſhrubs which ſurrounded their habitation. She was

was worn away to a ſkeleton; and had, for her clothing, only an old woollen rag round her loins. She came, and threw herſelf at the feet of Mary, (who was preparing the breakfaſt againſt her mothers return-ed,) and thus addreſſed her: "Young "Miſs, take pity upon a poor fugi-"tive ſlave. I have wandered in "theſe mountains for a month, half "dead with hunger, and often pur-"ſued by hunters and dogs. I fly "from my maſter, who is a rich in-"habitant of the Black River. He "hath treated me as you behold." At the ſame time ſhe ſhewed her body furrowed with deep ſcars from the ſtrokes of a whip. She added, "I was going to drown myſelf; but "recollecting that you dwelt here, "I ſaid, ſince there are ſome good "whites in this country, I will not

"die

" die yet." Mary, quite ſhocked, replied, " Unfortunate creature! be " comforted!—Eat, eat:" and ſhe gave her the family breakfaſt, which ſhe had prepared. The ſlave, in a few moments, devoured the whole. Mary, when ſhe ſaw her hunger allayed, ſaid to her, " Poor miſerable " creature! I will go to your maſter, " and intreat your forgiveneſs. I am " ſure that the ſight of you muſt " move his compaſſion. Will you " conduct me to him?"—" Angel of " God, (returned the negro woman,) " I will follow you whereſoever you " will." Mary called her brother, and intreated him to accompany her. The ſlave conducted them through bye paths, to the midſt of the wood, acroſs high mountains, which they climbed with difficulty, and large rivers, which they forded. At length,

length, about noon, they reached the bottom of the lane which led up to a well built houſe, ſituated on the banks of the Black River. The plantations were conſiderable; and a great number of ſlaves were ſeen buſied in every kind of labour. Their maſter walked in the midſt of them; his pipe in his mouth, and a rattan in his hand. His complexion was of an olive colour, his countenance ſevere, and his eyes ſhaded with large black brows, which joined one another. Mary trembling took Paul by the hand, and advanced towards this ſtern looking man. She intreated him, for God's ſake, to pardon his ſlave, who was at a ſmall diſtance behind. At firſt he took little notice of them in their coarſe habit: but when he obſerved the elegant make of Mary, her beautiful flaxen hair under a blue hood

hood, and heard the ſweet ſound of her voice, which trembled, as well as her body, in aſking forgiveneſs, he took his pipe from his mouth, and raiſing his rattan towards heaven, ſwore, with a moſt frightful oath, that he pardoned his ſlave, not for the ſake of God, but for her ſake. Mary immediately made a ſign to the ſlave to approach her maſter; then hurried away, and Paul followed her. They returned the ſame way they came, and reached a little arbour, where they ſeated themſelves, wearied with fatigue, and overpowered with hunger and thirſt. They had faſted, and walked five leagues, ſince the riſing of the ſun. "Siſter, (ſaid Paul "to Mary,) it is now noon: you are "both hungry and thirſty; here we "ſhall not find any thing to eat: let "us return and aſk for ſome bread

" from the maſter of the ſlave."
" Oh no, (ſaid Mary,) I am afraid.
" You remember what my mother
" hath frequently ſaid," that " the
" bread of the wicked filleth the
" mouth with gravel." " What
" ſhall we do, (ſaid Paul?) Theſe
" trees produce only hurtful fruit.
" There is nought here but a tama-
" rind or a citron to refreſh you."
" God will take pity upon us, (ſaid
" Mary:) he hears the little birds
" which cry unto him for food."
Scarcely had ſhe ſaid theſe words, when ſhe heard the noiſe of a ſpring falling from a neighbouring rock. Thither they ran, and having allayed their thirſt with water clearer than cryſtal, they gathered a few creſſes which grew on its borders. As they caſt their eyes around, if they found not a food more ſolid, Mary perceived,

ceived, among the trees of the foreſt, a young palm tree. The little heads, like cabbages, which grow on the tops of theſe trees, encircled with leaves, afford an agreeable food; but though they are not thicker than a perſon's leg, they are above ſixty feet high. In fact, the wood of this tree is only formed of a bundle of filaments; but its ſap is ſo hard, as to be proof againſt the beſt hatchets; and Paul had not even a knife. He conceived the idea of ſetting fire to the bottom of the tree: but another difficulty ſtarted, no flint was to be found in this iſland, almoſt covered with rocks. Induſtry ſprang from neceſſity, and often the moſt uſeful inventions are attributed to the moſt miſerable men. By rubbing a ſharp edged ſtone with celerity againſt the

the foot of the tree, and repeatedly applying the dry leaves which lay round, he at length ſucceeded; the tree took fire, and fell with a great craſh. They then eat part of the head raw, and part they roaſted; and they found it both ways equally palatable. They made this frugal repaſt with joy, in remembering the good action they had done in the morning: but this joy was dampt, when they reflected what might have been the uneaſineſs of their mothers during their abſence. Mary's thoughts frequently turned upon this ſubject; but Paul, when he perceived her ſtrength recruited, aſſured her that they would return, and ſatisfy their parents.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

PAUL AND MARY LOSE THEMSELVES.

AFTER they had dined, they found themſelves greatly embarraſſed, having no guide to conduct them to their dwelling. But Paul, who gave himſelf little concern in any difficulty, ſaid to Mary, "Our cottage lies towards the ſun in "the middle of the day; we muſt "therefore paſs, as we did this "morning, over that mountain

" which you ſee yonder with three " ſummits. Come, let us proceed, " ſiſter." This mountain was called La Montagne des Trois Mamelles; ſo named becauſe it reſembles three breaſts. They then deſcended the mountain called Le Morne, which is ſituated on the north ſide of the Black River, and arrived, after an hour's walk, on the borders of a large river, which impeded their courſe. This principal part of the iſland, entirely covered with foreſts, is ſo little known even in the preſent day, that ſeveral of its rivers and mountains have no name. The river, upon the border of which they now ſtood, flowed rapidly along on a bed of rocks. The noiſe of the waters terrified Mary; ſhe did not dare to put her foot forward to attempt to ford it. Paul, therefore,

therefore, took Mary on his back, and, thus loaded, paſſed over the ſlippery rocks, notwithſtanding the tumult of the waves. " Be not " afraid, (ſaid he;) I can carry you " very well." When he reached the ſhore, he would have continued his courſe, loaded with his ſiſter, and even flattered himſelf, that he could aſcend the Montagne des Trois Mamelles, which ſeemed about half a league before him, but his ſtrength failed him, and he was obliged to ſet her down, and reſt himſelf by her. Mary then ſaid, " Bro- " ther, the day draws to a cloſe; you " have yet ſtrength to proceed; as " for me, I am unable; leave me " here, and return alone to our " dwellings, to calm the uneaſineſs " of our mothers." " Oh! no, " (ſaid Paul;) I will not quit thee. " If night overtakes us in theſe

" woods, I will fell ſome of theſe " palm trees; I will light a fire; " thou ſhalt eat of the like heads as " you have juſt done; and I will " make a covering for you with the " leaves." Mary being a little compoſed, he gathered the long ſcolopendra leaves from an old tree, which hung over the banks of the river. With them he made a kind of buſkins to cover her feet, which, cut by the ſtones in the road, were now bleeding; for, in her eagerneſs to be uſeful, ſhe had forgotton to put on her ſhoes. Feeling herſelf refreſhed by the coolneſs of the leaves, ſhe broke off a branch of bamboo, and began to walk, ſupporting one hand on her ſtick, and the other on her brother.

They

They walked thus gentle acroſs the woods; but, by the heighth of the trees, and the thickneſs of the leaves, they often loſt ſight of the mountain which was their guide, and the ſun was beginning to ſet. At length, they quitted the open path, in which they had hitherto gone, and found themſelves in a labyrinth of trees and rocks. Paul made Mary ſit down, and, almoſt diſtracted, ran hither and thither, to find a way out of this maze; but he fatigued himſelf in vain. He climbed to the top of a tree, to diſcover, if poſſible, the Three Breaſted Mountain, (Montagne des Trois Mamelles,) but he only perceived the tops of trees, ſome of which were gilded by the laſt rays of the ſetting ſun. The ſhade of the mountains already covered the foreſts in the

vales; the wind grew calm, as it commonly happens at the cloſe of the day; a profound ſilence reigned in theſe ſolitudes; nought but the ſound of the deer was heard, which came to repoſe in theſe retired places. Paul, hoping that ſome hunter might hear him, cried aloud, " Come, " come to the relief of Mary!" But the echos of the foreſts alone reſponded to his voice, and ſeveral times repeated " Mary——Mary."

Paul then deſcended from the tree, overcome with fatigue and vexation. He ſought to contrive how they might paſs the night in that dreary place; but there was neither ſpring, or palm tree, nor even any dry branches fit to light up a fire. He began to weep. Mary ſaid to him, " Weep not, my brother, if you " wiſh

" wiſh not to load me with grief.
" 'Tis I who am the cauſe of your
" diſtreſs, and of that which our
" mothers at this moment expe-
" rience. We ſhould not do any
" thing, not even good, without
" conſulting our parents. Oh! I
" have been very imprudent!" and
ſhe began to weep. However, ſhe
ſaid to Paul, " Let us pray to God,
" brother, and he will have mercy
" upon us." Scarcely had they con-
cluded their prayer, when they heard
a dog bark. " It is (ſaid Paul) the
" dog of ſome hunter, who comes
" to lay in ambuſh by night to kill
" deer." A little after the dog's
barking increaſed. " I think (ſaid
" Mary) it is Fidelia, our houſe dog.
" Yes, I know his voice. Is it
" poſſible we could be ſo near home
" as the foot of our mountain?" In

a moment after, Fidelia was at their feet, barking, howling, moaning, and fawning upon them. Before they could recover from their ſurprize, they perceived Domingo, their negro, running towards them. At the arrival of this honeſt black, who wept for joy, they alſo wept, without being able to utter a word. When Domingo had recovered himſelf; " O my young maſter and miſtreſs, (ſaid he,) your mothers " are greatly diſtreſſed. How " were they ſurprized, when, re- " turning from church, they found " you not at home? Mary, who " was working in one corner of the " cottage, could not declare whether " you were gone, I went to and fro, " round the houſe, not knowing " where to ſeek you. I made Fi- " delia ſmell ſome of your old " cloaths:

" cloaths: immediately the animal,
" as if he underſtood me, began to
" trace your ſteps; he conducted me
" (wagging his tail) to the Black
" River. 'Twas there I learnt, from
" a planter, that you had brought
" back his run-away ſlave, and
" that he had, at your intreaty, par-
" doned her. But what a pardon!
" He ſhewed her to me with a log
" and chain round her leg, and an
" iron collar round her neck! Fi-
" delia turning from this place, con-
" ducted me to the banks of the
" Black River, then ſtood barking
" with all his might. 'Twas upon
" the brink of a ſpring, near a palm
" tree which had been felled, and a
" fire which was ſtill ſmoking. At
" laſt he conducted me hither. We
" are at the foot of the mountain
" des Trois Mamelles; we have yet

" full

" full three leagues to our dwelling. " Come eat, and gather ſtrength." He immediately offered them a cake, fruits, and a bottle filled with a liquor compoſed of wine, water, the juice of citron, ſugar, and nutmeg, which their mothers had prepared to ſtrengthen and refreſh them. Mary ſighed at the remembrance of the poor ſlave, and the diſtreſs of their mothers. Frequently did ſhe repeat, " Oh! how difficult it is to do " good!" While Paul and ſhe refreſhed themſelves, Domingo made a fire; and having ſought for a branch of a tree which burns with a bright green flame, he made a torch of it, and lighted it, for it was night. But he experienced an unforeſeen embarraſſment, when he was about to ſet off. Paul and Mary could not walk; their feet were red and ſwell-

ed.

ed. Domingo was at a ſtand, whether to go and aſk aſſiſtance at a diſtance, or paſs the night with them in this place. " There was a " time (ſaid he) when I carried " you both at once in my arms, but " now you are grown big, and I am " old." While they were in this perplexity, a troop of blacks appeared, about twenty yards diſtant. The chief of them approaching Paul and Mary, ſaid, " Good little " whites, are you not afraid? Did " we not ſee you paſs this morning " with a negro woman of the Black " River? You went to procure her " pardon of her deteſtable maſter. " In gratitude for that action, we " will carry you home on our " ſhoulders." Then he immediately gave a ſignal, that four of the ſtouteſt blacks ſhould make a litter of branches

branches of trees, and placing Paul and Mary thereon, carry them home on their ſhoulders; which being done, they proceeded, while Domingo walked before with his torch, at the joyful cries of the whole troop, who loaded them with bleſſings. Mary ſaid to Paul, "Oh, brother! "never does God ſuffer a good ac- "tion to go unrewarded."

About the middle of the night, they reached the foot of their mountain, the ſummits of which were enlightened by ſeveral fires. Hardly did they begin to aſcend, when they heard the cries of their mothers: "Is it you, my children?" They anſwered, with the blacks, "Yes, "it is we!" and ſoon they perceived their mothers and Mary coming to meet them with lighted torches.

"Unhappy

" Unhappy children, (ſaid Madam " de la Tour,) whence come you? " Into what agonies have you thrown " us!" " We are come from the " Black River, whether we went to " obtain the pardon of a poor " ſlave, to whom I gave this morn- " ing the family breakfaſt, becauſe " ſhe appeared almoſt famiſhed to " death; and theſe good blacks " have brought us back." Madam de la Tour embraced her daughter, without being able to utter a ſylla- ble; and Mary, who felt her face bedewed with the tears of her mo- ther, ſaid, " You recompence me " for all the diſtreſſes I have felt!" Margaret, in a rapture of joy, ſqueezed Paul in her arms, and ſaid to him, " And thou alſo, my ſon, haſt done " a good action." When they reach- " ed the cottage with their chil- dren

dren, they gave the blacks ſome-thing to eat, who returned into the woods, wiſhing them all poſſible happineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

A LATIN INSCRIPTION.

EACH day was to theſe families a day of happineſs and peace. Neither envy or ambition tormented them. They ſought not a vain reputation abroad; they were ſatisfied in being the witneſſes and judges of themſelves. In this iſland, as in all the European colonies, there is not an eager curioſity for malicious anecdotes; thus the virtues and

and names of our little families were unknown. Only, when a paſſenger, on his way to the Pamplemouſes, enquired of the inhabitants of the plain, "Who are thoſe who dwell in thoſe "little cottages up in the moun-"tain?" the anſwer was, without knowing their names, "They are "good people." Thus violets, under a thorny brake, exhale, at a diſtance, their ſweet perfumes, without being ſeen.

They had baniſhed from their converſation ſlander, which, under an appearance of juſtice, neceſſarily diſpoſes the heart to hatred or falſity; for it is impoſſible not to hate men, if we believe them wicked; or to live with the wicked, without concealing our hatred under the falſe appearances of good will. Thus

ſlander

ſlander obliges us to be at variance with ourſelves, or others. But without judging men in particular, they only thought of the means of being generally uſeful; and though they had it not always in their power, they had a perpetual good will, which cheriſhed in them a benevolence ever ready to extend itſelf abroad. Thus living in ſolitude, far from being ſavages, they were become more humane. If the ſcandals of hiſtory did not furniſh matter for converſation, the hiſtory of nature filled them with raptures of joy. They admired, with tranſport, the power of that Providence, who, by means of their hands, had ſpread, in the midſt of theſe barren rocks, abundance, beauty, pure pleaſures, ſimple and ever renewing.

Paul, at the age of twelve years, more robuſt and intelligent than Europeans at fifteen, had embelliſhed what Domingo only had cultivated. He went with him into the neighbouring woods, to root up the young plants of citron, orange, and tamarind trees. Theſe he planted, already large, round the encloſure; ſo that, in the courſe of time, from the centre, it had the appearance of an amphitheatre. Every vegetable he planted in its proper ſoil, having only nature for his guide. The waters, which flowed from the tops of the rocks, formed, in the vale, a liquid ſheet, which, like a mirror, reflected the trees in bloom, the ſtupendous rocks, and the azure ſky. Thus this place, which now appears a deſert, once reſembled the Paradiſe of Eden.

'Twas

'Twas upon this rock (ſaid the old man, pointing to the left) that theſe happy families aſſembled in the evening, to enjoy the cool air, the murmuring of brooks, the perfume of the flowers, and the beauties of the ſetting ſun.

Nothing was more pleaſing than the names given to the major part of the charming retreats of this laby-rinth. That rock, which I juſt mentioned, was called "The Diſ-"covery of Friendſhip." Paul and Mary had planted a bamboo upon it, at the top of which they hoiſted a white handkerchief, when-ever they beheld me, to ſignify my arrival, in the reſemblance of the ſignal given at the top of yonder mountain, when a ſhip is diſcovered at ſea.

At that time I placed an inſcription upon this ſpot. Whatever pleaſure I have enjoyed in travelling to view a ſtatue or monument of antiquity, I have ſtill enjoyed more in reading an inſcription ſo ſuitable. It ſeems to me as if a human voice iſſued from the ſtone, made itſelf heard through ages, and addreſſing itſelf to man amidſt theſe dreary deſerts, informs him, that he is not alone; and that other men, in theſe very ſpots, have felt, thought, and ſuffered like himſelf. That if this inſcription is of an ancient nation, which no longer exiſts, it points his ſoul through fields of infinity, inſpires him with the ſentiment of immortality, and ſhews him, that a thought hath ſurvived even the ruin of an empire.

The

The inſcription I wrote, was theſe verſes of Horace, juſt under the weather cock, or what ſerved for one:

" ——— Fratres Helenæ, lucida ſidera,
" Ventorumque regat pater,
" Obſtrictis aliis, præter Iapyga."

May ——————————
The twin ſtars with ſaving luſtre ſhine;
So may the father of the wind,
All, but the weſtern gales, propitious bind.

I alſo cut this verſe of Virgil upon the bark of a tree, under the ſhade of which Paul frequently ſat, to view, at a diſtance, the agitated ſea.

" Fortunatus et ille deos qui novit agreſtes!"

And happy too is he who——————
——————— Adores the rural powers.

And alſo this over the door of Madam de la Tour's cottage, which was their general place of meeting:

" At ſecura quies, et neſcia fallere vita."

But eaſy quiet, a ſecure retreat,
A harmleſs life, that knows not how to cheat.

But Mary did not approve of my latin. She ſaid, what I had put under the weathercock, was too long, and too learned. I ſhould rather chooſe, ſaid ſhe, " Ever agitated, " but conſtant." This device, I replied, is more ſuitable to virtue. My reflection made her bluſh.

Theſe happy families expanded their ſenſible ſouls to every ſurrounding object. They had given the

the tendereſt names to the moſt indifferent objects.

A circle of orange and banana trees, planted in a ring round a graſs plat, in the midſt of which Paul and Mary frequently went to dance, was called, " The Agree-" ment." An old tree, under whoſe ſhadow Madam de la Tour and Margaret related their misfortunes, was called, " The tears wiped " away." They gave the names of Britanny and Normandy, to little parcels of earth which they had ſown with corn, ſtrawberries, and peas. Domingo and Mary, in remembrance of the place of their nativity, gave to two ſpots where the oziers grew, (with which they made baſkets,) the names of Angola, and Foullepointe. Thus, by theſe pro-

ductions of the climate, theſe exiled families preſerved the pleaſing illuſions of their country, and ſoothed their anxieties in a foreign land. Alas! I have ſeen animated with a thouſand charming appellations, the trees, fountains, and rocks of this place, now ſo fallen to decay, and which, like a Grecian plain, only preſents us with ruins and affecting names.

But of all that this encloſure contains, nought was more agreeable than the ſpot called "The Repoſe of "Mary," at the foot of the rock, "The Diſcovery of Friendſhip," in a hollow place, whence iſſues a ſpring, which forms a ſmall lake of water in the midſt of a beautiful meadow. When Margaret firſt brought Paul into the world, I made

made her a preſent of a young cocoa tree, which had been given to me. She planted it upon the border of the lake, that it might ſtand as the memorial of the birth of her ſon. Madam de la Tour, with the like intention, planted another when Mary was born. Theſe two trees formed the whole of the archives of the two little families. The one was called Paul, and the other Mary. They both grew in proportion as the children of an unequal height; but which, at the end of twelve years, overtopt the cottages. Under theſe trees, upon the border of the lake, Mary frequently repoſed. To this retired ſpot, decorated with a wild magnificence, often did ſhe come to waſh the linen of the family. Sometimes ſhe would lead thither her goats, and, while ſhe made cheeſe of their milk, ſhe

delighted herſelf in ſeeing them brouze on the ſhrubs which grew on every ſide. Paul, when he ſaw that Mary took delight in that ſpot, carried thither, from the neighbouring foreſts, the neſts of all kinds of birds. The old ones followed their young, and thus ſettled in this new plantation. Mary, from time to time, ſcattered corn for their food. So that ſoon, the birds flocked round her like poultry; while Paul and herſelf enjoyed the effects of his art.

Amiable children, thus paſſed in innocence your earlier years! How oft have your mothers embraced you in their arms, and gratefully bleſſed heaven for the conſolation they might enjoy in their offspring, when bowed down with years! How

How oft have I with them partook of your rural amuſements! Not an animal was ſlain for your feaſts; but fruits, the moſt agreeable of every kind, with callabaſhes of milk, and new laid eggs, afforded a repaſt ſuperior to the luxury of kings. Your converſation was as ſweet as your feſtivals were innocent. Seated there, Paul often talked of the labours of the paſt day, aud thoſe of the next. He was ever ſtudying ſomething uſeful for the ſociety. Here, the paths were not convenient; there, the ſeats were not commodious: here, theſe young arbours did not afford ſufficient ſhade; Mary would be better in another.

In the rainy ſeaſon they paſſed the day together in the cottage. Miſtreſſes and ſervants were employed in

in ſomething uſeful; ſome in making mats of green withes, others forming baſkets of oziers. Every thing appeared in the greateſt order. Hatchets, ſpades, and rakes, were ſeen ranged againſt the wall; and near theſe inſtruments of agriculture, appeared the productions of labour, ſacks full of grain, and ſheaves of corn; delicacy ever joined with abundance. Mary, inſtructed by her mother and Margaret, made ſherbet and cordials, from the juice of ſugar canes, citrons, and limes.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

PHILANTHROPY.

WHEN the evening came, they ſupped together by the light of a lamp. Afterwards, Madam de la Tour, or Margaret, related the hiſtories of travellers wandering in the night through the woods of Europe, infeſted with thieves; or the ſhipwreck of ſome veſſel, thrown by a tempeſt on the rocks of a deſert iſland. At the recital of theſe melancholy

lancholy tales, the ſenſible ſouls of their children were with ardour inflamed; and they intreated heaven to favour them ſome day, with the opportunity of exerciſing their hoſpitality towards ſuch unfortunate beings. Thus diſcourſed theſe two families, and ſeparated to repoſe themſelves, impatient to ſee each other the next morn.

Sometimes they were lulled aſleep by the noiſe of the rain, which fell in torrents on the roof of their cottage; or that of the winds, which bore the diſtant murmur of fleets which daſhed on the ſhore. They bleſſed God for their perſonal ſecurity, the ſentiment of which was heightened by that of the diſtant danger.

Frequently

Frequently Madam de la Tour read publicly ſome ſtriking hiſtory from the Old or New Teſtament. They reaſoned little upon theſe ſacred books; for the whole of their theology was in ſentiment, like that of nature; and the whole of their moral in action, like that of the goſpel. They had no fixed days, either for pleaſure or ſadneſs. Every day was to them a feſtival; and whatever ſurrounded them a divine temple, in which they inceſſantly admired an infinite, intelligent, and omnipotent Being, the friend of mankind. This ſentiment of confidence in the Supreme Power, filled them with conſolation for the paſt, courage for the preſent, and hope for the future. Thus theſe women, forced by misfortune to enter again into nature, had developed in themſelves, and

their

their children, thoſe ſentiments which nature alone beſtows, to prevent us from falling into misfortune.

But as clouds of affliction will ſometimes hover over the beſt regulated mind, ſo when any member of their little ſociety appeared ſad, all the others united to cheer their melancholy, more by ſentiment than reflection. Each had their particular characteriſtic: Margaret a lively gaiety; Madam de la Tour a mild theology; Mary tender careſſes; Paul freedom and cordiality. Even Domingo and Mary lent their little aid. They were diſtreſſed, if they ſaw their miſtreſſes afflicted; and they wept, when they ſaw them weep. Thus feeble plants are united together,

gether, to be able to reſiſt the fury of a ſtorm.

When the weather was fine, they all went together on a Sunday to the church of the Pamplemouſes, the ſteeple of which you ſee yonder in the plain. There frequently came the rich inhabitants of the iſland, in palanquins, to contract an acquaintance with theſe worthy and united families, and to invite them to parties of pleaſure. But they ever reſiſted their offers with modeſty and reſpect; perſuaded that the powerful only court the weak to hold them in ſubjection; that it is impoſſible to be complaiſant and ſubmiſſive, but in flattering the paſſions of another, good or bad. On the other hand, they as cautiouſly

avoided an acquaintance of the poor inhabitants, generally jealous, ſlanderous, and clowniſh. With ſome they paſſed for baſhful, with others for proud: but their reſerved conduct was accompanied with marks of ſuch obliging politeneſs, above all towards the wretched, that they inſenſibly acquired the reſpect of the rich, and the confidence of the poor.

After church, people frequently came to requeſt their attention in matters of moment. There was a perſon in affliction who ſtood in need of their advice: a young child intreated them to come to the houſe of their ſick mother, in a neighbouring quarter.

They

They always carried about them uſeful receipts, for the uſual diſorders of the inhabitants, to which they joined good will, which enhances the value of trifling ſervices. They particularly ſucceeded in relieving the troubles of the mind, ſo intolerable in ſolitude and an infirm body. Madam de la Tour ſpoke with ſuch confidence of the Deity, that the ſick hearing her, thought him preſent. Frequently did Mary return from theſe ſcenes of ſorrow with eyes ſuffuſed in tears, but a heart filled with joy, that ſhe had an opportunity of doing good. 'Twas ſhe who prepared aforehand the neceſſary remedies for the ſick, and who adminiſtered them with an engaging tenderneſs

After ſuch humane viſits, they ſometimes protracted their walk home, by going through the valley of the long mountain, and paying me a viſit, where I waited for them to dinner upon the bank of the little river, which flows through my neighbourhood. Upon theſe occaſions, I procured ſome bottles of old wine, that I might increaſe the gaiety of our Indian repaſts, by the mild and cordial productions of Europe. At other times we met upon the ſea ſhore, near the mouth of a little rivulet; thither we carried our vegetable food, which, joined to that the ſea produced, afforded us a ſumptuous meal. Thus the moſt diſmal ſituations procured us frequently the moſt tranquil pleaſures. Sometimes, ſeated on a great rock, we

we beheld the briny waves approach and break at our feet with horrid noiſe. Paul, who ſwam like a fiſh, would ſometimes advance to meet the billows, and, at their approach, fly along the ſhore. But Mary, at ſight of him, uttered the moſt piercing cries, and intreated him to deſiſt from ſuch hazardous ſport.

Our repaſts concluded with ſongs and dances of the young people. Mary ſung the pleaſures of the rural life, and the dangers of the ſea, which furious element men, prompted by avarice, navigate, rather than cultivate the earth, which peaceably ſo many gifts beſtows.

CHAP. X.

RURAL AMUSEMENTS.

SOMETIMES Mary, in imitation of the blacks, performed, with Paul, a pantomime. A pantomime is the firſt language of man; it is known in every nation. It is ſo natural and expreſſive, that the children of the white people fail not to learn it, when once they have ſeen the blacks perform. Mary, recalling to

to mind the leſſons her mother had given her, and the hiſtories which had moſt affected her, very naturally repreſented the principal events. Sometimes, at the ſound of tam, tam, from Domingo, ſhe would appear upon the green turf, bearing a pitcher on her head. She advanced with timidity to the ſpring to draw water. Domingo and Mary, repreſenting the ſhepherds of Madian, forbad her, and pretended to drive her away. Paul ran to her aſſiſtance, beat the ſhepherds, and filling the pitcher, put it on his head, and at the ſame time placed a roſy crown of flowers on the blooming maid. Then they intreated me to perſonate Raquel; and I granted my daughter Saphora in marriage to Paul.

Another time ſhe repreſented the unfortunate Ruth, who returns poor and a widow into her own country, unknown to all, after her long abſence. Domingo and Mary counterfeit the reapers. Mary pretends to glean, here and there, ſome ears of corn. Paul, imitating the gravity of a patriarch, interrogates her; ſhe trembling anſwers his queſtions. He, ſoon moved with compaſſion, grants an aſylum to innocence, and hoſpitality to the unfortunate. He filled the apron of Mary with every kind of proviſion, and brings her before us, as before the elders of the city, declaring that he took her in marriage, notwithſtanding her indigence. Madam de la Tour, recalling to mind the forlorn ſituation in which her relations had forſaken

forſaken her, her widowhood, the friendly reception of Margaret, followed now by the hopes of a happy marriage between their children, was quite overpowered, and could not refrain from weeping; and this confuſed recollection of happy and unfortunate circumſtances, made us all ſhed tears, both of grief and joy.

Theſe little dramas were repreſented ſo juſtly, that we were led to ſuppoſe ourſelves tranſported into the plains of Syria, or fields of Paleſtine. We wanted not the decorations of lights, or of orcheſtras ſuitable to the ſpectacle; for the place of repreſentation was uſually in an open part of the foreſt. The windings of the trees formed round us ſeveral feſtoons

toons of foliage: we were ſheltered from the heat during the day: but when the ſun was deſcending to the horizon, its rays, broken by the trunks of the trees, diverged through the ſhades of the foreſt, in long, narrow luminous beams, which produced the moſt beautiful effect.

The night frequently ſurprized us in the midſt of our rural amuſements; but the pureneſs of the air, and the mildneſs of the climate, permitted us to ſleep under a covering, in the centre of a wood. No fear of robbers diſtreſſed us: we returned next day to our cottages, and we found them in the ſame ſituation in which we had left them. So much good faith and ſimplicity was to be found in this iſland, where commerce

commerce was hardly known, that a lock or a key were ſcarce ſeen, and only kept as a curioſity by few.

Europeans, whoſe minds are filled, even from infancy, with ſo many prepoſſeſſions contrary to happineſs, you are at a loſs to conceive how nature can beſtow ſo much reaſon, and ſo many delights. Your ſouls, circumſcribed within the ſmall ſphere of human acquaintances, ſoon attain to the utmoſt bound of artificial enjoyment; but nature and the heart are inexhauſtible. Mary and Paul had neither clocks, almanacks, nor books of chronology, hiſtory or philoſophy. The periods of their lives were regulated by thoſe of nature. They knew the hours of the day, by the ſhades of the trees; the ſeaſons,

ſeaſons, by the time they yielded their flowers or their fruits; and the years, by the number of harveſts. Theſe pleaſing images filled their converſation with the greateſt charms. "It is time to go to "dinner, (ſaid Mary;) the ſhades "of the bananas are at their feet. "The night draws on, the tama-"rinds are cloſing their leaves." "When will you come to ſee us," ſaid ſome of their neighbouring friends? "At the ſugar canes," replied Mary. When any one enquired the age of Paul or herſelf; "My brother (ſaid ſhe) is of the "age of the great cocoa tree upon "the borders of the rivulet; and I "am as old as the leaſt. The "oranges have bloſſomed twenty-"four times ſince I came into the "world."

" world." Their lives ſeemed attached to thoſe of the trees, like thoſe of the fauns and dryades. They knew no hiſtorical æra than that of the lives of their mothers; they knew no other chronology than that of their orchards; no philoſophy than that of being uſeful to every body; and a perfect reſignation to the will of the Supreme.

After all theſe advantages from nature, what need had theſe young people of riches, or the knowledge of European cuſtoms? Their wants and their ignorance added to their felicity.

Thus grew theſe two young perſons according to nature. No care had wrinkled their cheeks; no intemperance

perance had corrupted their blood; no unfortunate paſſion depraved their hearts; but love, innocence, and piety, developed every day the beauty of their ſouls; and ineffable grace appeared in their features, their attitudes, and motions. In the morning of life they poſſeſſed the bloom of it; like as, in the garden of Eden, appeared our firſt parents, when juſt coming from the hands of their Creator, they lived, and converſed with each other, like brother and ſiſter. Mary, mild, modeſt, and confident, like Eve; and Paul, like Adam, having the form of a man, with the ſimplicity of a child.

Sometimes, when alone, he would ſay to her, at his return from his labours, " When I am fatigued, your

" preſence enlivens me. When,
" from the top of the mountain, I
" perceive you in this vale, you ap-
" pear to me, in the midſt of our
" trees, like the bud of a roſe.
" When you walk towards the
" houſes of our mothers, the par-
" tridge, which runs towards its
" young, has a ſhape leſs beautiful,
" and a gait leſs active. Though I
" loſe ſight of thee, by the interven-
" tion of the trees, yet to find the
" again, I have no need of ſeeing
" thee; ſomething of thee, which
" I am unable to expreſs, remains
" for me in the air through which
" thou paſſeſt, ſomething on the
" graſs whereon thou haſt reſted.
" When I approach thee, my ſenſes
" are raviſhed. The azure of the
" ſky is leſs beautiful than the blue

" of

" of thine eyes; the ſweet notes of
" the birds of Bengal are leſs ſoft
" than the tone of thy voice. If
" I do but touch thee with the end
" of my finger, my whole body
" vibrates with pleaſure. Do you
" not remember the day we paſſed
" over the rivulet on our return
" from the Black River? Although
" I was fatigued when I reached it,
" yet, when I took thee on my
" back, I ſeemed as though I had
" the wings of a bird. Tell me by
" what charm thou haſt been able
" to enchant me? Is it by the quali-
" ties of thy mind? but our mo-
" thers are ſuperior to us both. Is
" it by thy careſſes? but they em-
" brace me oftner than thou. I be-
" lieve it is thy goodneſs. I re-
" member when you walked bare-

" foot to aſk forgiveneſs for the fu-
" gitive ſlave—Here, my beloved,
" accept of this blooming citron
" branch, which I have cut in the
" foreſt. Thou ſhalt put it un-
" der thy pillow at night. Eat this
" charming honey, I have collected
" from a rock. But firſt repoſe
" thee on my boſom, and I ſhall be
" refreſhed."

Mary anſwered him; " Oh, my
" brother! the rays of the morning
" ſun, from the top of the rock,
" afford me leſs joy than I feel at
" thy preſence. I fondly love my
" mother; I alſo love thine; but
" when they call thee their ſon, I
" love them ſtill more. When
" they careſs thee, I feel more ſatiſ-
" faction than when I am careſſed.

" You aſk me, wherefore do you
" love me? I anſwer, all that are
" brought up together muſt love
" one another. Obſerve our birds;
" brought up in the ſame neſt, they,
" like us, entertain a love for each
" other: hark how they call and
" anſwer from tree to tree. So,
" when the ſweet notes of thy flute,
" echoing from the top of the moun-
" tain, reach my raviſhed ear, I re-
" peat the words as I ſit in the vale.
" Thou haſt been dear to me, ever
" ſince you offered to inſiſt on the
" pardon of the ſlave. From that
" time I have many times ſaid, Ah!
" my brother is poſſeſſed of an
" amiable heart: without him I
" ſhould often be terrified with fear.
" I every day intreat heaven for my
" mother, for thine, for thee, alſo

" for

" for our poor ſervants; but when
" I pronounce thy name, I feel my
" devotion increaſe. Then I ear-
" neſtly intreat the Supreme to
" ſhield thee from harm! Where-
" fore goeſt thou ſo far and ſo high,
" to procure me flowers and fruits?
" Does not your own garden afford
" us ſufficient? How fatigued you
" appear; you are all in a perſpira-
" tion." Then, with her little white handkerchief, wiped his forehead and cheeks, and gave him a kiſs.

CHAP. XI.

LOVE.

SOMETIME after, Mary felt herſelf attacked by an unknown diſorder. Her beautiful blue eyes were deprived of their luſtre; her complexion grew yellow; and an univerſal languor weakened her frame. Serenity was no longer ſeen on her countenance, nor a ſmile on her lips. She ſuddenly appeared gay

gay without joy, and ſad without ſorrow. She ſhunned her innocent amuſements, her daily occupations, and the ſociety of her well beloved family. She wandered here and there, in the moſt ſolitary places, every where ſeeking repoſe, and finding it not. Sometimes, at the ſight of Paul, ſhe would, in a toying manner, run to meet him; but, upon her approaching him, a ſudden embarraſſment ſeizcd her, a lovely bluſh coloured her pale cheeks, and ſhe durſt not raiſe her eyes to meet his. Paul ſaid to her, "The ver-"dure covers theſe rocks; our "birds ſing when they ſee thee. "Every thing is chearful around "thee; thou alone art ſad." He endeavoured to animate her by embracing her; but ſhe turned away

her head, and trembling fled towards her mother. The unhappy maiden felt herſelf uneaſy from the careſſes of her brother. Paul was at a loſs to account for the novelty of her behaviour. But one misfortune comes not alone.

One of thoſe ſeaſons which, from time to time, deſolate the countries ſituated between the tropics, extended its ravages to this little iſle. 'Twas in the month of December, when the ſun in Capricorn, during three weeks, makes the Iſle of France glow with its vertical fires. The wind, which, in theſe parts, is generally ſouth-eaſt the whole of the year, no longer continued to blow. Long whirlwinds of duſt, which roſe from the road, remained ſuſpended

ſuſpended in the air. The earth cracked in various places; the herbage was withered; warm exhalations iſſued from the ſides of the mountains, and their waters were dried up. Not a cloud came from the ſea. Only burning vapours aroſe during the day above the plains, and appeared, at the ſetting of the ſun, like ſo many flames from a furnace. The ruddy orb of the moon aroſe, in a miſty horizon, with an unmeaſured greatneſs. Even night produced no refreſhing coolneſs in the glowing atmoſphere. The fainting flocks, on the ſides of the hills, with their mouths towards heaven, breathing the air, made the vallies reſound with their ſad moans. The Cafré himſelf, who drove them, laid on the ground, to ſeek coolneſs

thereon. The ſcorching beams of the ſun penetrated every where; and the ſultry air reſounded with the humming of inſects, who ſought to allay their thirſt in the blood of animals and men.

In one of theſe ardent nights, Mary felt all the ſymptoms of her diſorder increaſe. She aroſe, and ſat herſelf down. Again ſhe reclined on the bed; but in no attitude could ſhe find ſleep or repoſe. She walked, by the light of the moon, towards her fountain: ſhe perceived its ſpring, which, notwithſtanding the drought, flowed in ſilver ſtreams on the brown ſides of the rock. She plunged herſelf into the baſon. At firſt the coolneſs reanimated her ſenſes, and the remembrance of a thouſand

thouſand agreeable things preſented themſelves to her mind. She recollected that, in her infancy, her mother and Margaret amuſed themſelves in bathing her, with Paul, in the ſame place; and that Paul, reſerving this bath for her alone, had covered the bed with ſand, and ſowed on the borders aromatic herbs. She ſaw, while in the water, the ſhades of the two trees planted at the birth of her and her brother, and uniting their green branches over her head. She thought of the friendſhip of Paul, more ſweet than the perfume of the herbs, more pure than the water of the ſpring, ſtronger than the trees united together; and ſhe uttered a ſigh. She thought of the night, the ſolitarineſs of the place; and a burning fever ſeized her.

her. Immediately ſhe came out, terrified with the frightful ſhades; and the water ſeemed hotter than the ſun in the torrid zone. She ran to her mother to ſeek for a ſupport againſt herſelf. Several times wiſhing to declare the cauſe of her uneaſineſs, ſhe preſſed her hands between hers; ſeveral times was the name of Paul upon her lips, but her heart deprived her tongue of expreſſion. Then leaning her head on the boſom of her mother, ſhe poured forth a torrent of tears.

Madam de la Tour eaſily diſcerned the cauſe of her daughter's diſorder; but ſhe dared not ſpeak to her on the ſubject. "My child, (ſaid ſhe,) "addreſs yourſelf to God, who diſ-"poſes of health and life according "to

" to his pleaſure. He tries thee to
" day, that he may recompence thee
" to-morrow. Remember we are
" only on earth for the exerciſe of
" virtue."

Meanwhile the exceſſive heat raiſed from the ocean vapours which covered the iſland like a vaſt paraſol. The ſummits of the mountains collected them round them, and large ſtreams of fire frequently iſſued from their miſty tops. Soon dreadful claps of thunder made the woods, the plains, and the vallies reſound; and frightful rains, like cataracts, fell from the ſky. Foaming torrents were precipitated down the ſides of this mountain; and this enclоſure became like a ſea. This ſpot, where theſe cottages are ſituated,

became an iſland, and the entrance to this valley a ſluice, through which iſſued, in confuſion, with the roaring ſtreams, earth, rocks, and trees.

The whole family was intreating heaven in the cottage of Madam de la Tour, the roof of which cracked horribly with the force of the winds. Though the door, and the ſhutters, were faſtened, every object was plainly diſtinguiſhed by the glaring of the frequent and vivid flaſhes of lightning, through the chinks of the timber. The intrepid Paul, followed by Domingo, went from one cottage to the other, notwithſtanding the violence of the ſtorm, ſupporting one ſide with a prop, and driving nails in another. He only entered to comfort the family with the

the hopes of approaching fair weather. At laſt the rain ceaſed; the wind again blew from the ſouth-eaſt; the ſtormy clouds were diſperſed; and the ſetting ſun appeared at the horizon.

The firſt deſire of Mary was to viſit the place called her Repoſe. Paul approached her with a timid air, and preſented her his arm to aſſiſt her in walking. She accepted it ſmiling; and they both went out together from the cottage. The air was freſh. A white ſteam aroſe above the top of the mountain, furrowed, here and there, with the foam of the torrents, which had poured on all ſides. Their garden was overwhelmed by the dreadful floods; the major part of the fruit trees torn up

up by the roots; vaſt heaps of ſand had covered the meadows, and filled the bath of Mary. However, the two cocoa trees were ſtanding, and beginning to grow green. But there were neither graſs plats or arbours to be ſeen; and only a few birds, which, from the hollows of the neighbouring rocks, bemoaned the loſs of their young.

At the ſight of this deſolation, Mary ſaid to Paul, "You have "brought hither birds; the hurri-"cane hath killed them. You have "planted a garden, but the whole "is deſtroyed. Every thing periſhes "on earth; there is nothing but "heaven which does not undergo "a change!" Paul aſwered, "Why "can I not give you ſomething "from

" from heaven! for I poſſeſs no-
" thing on earth." Mary, bluſhing, replied, " You have the picture of " St. Paul." Scarcely had ſhe finiſhed ſpeaking, when he ran to fetch it from the cottage of his mother. This picture was a little miniature, repreſenting the hermit Paul. Margaret had a particular veneration for it. She had a long time worn it ſuſpended at her neck, when a girl; but when ſhe became a mother, ſhe had put it on her ſon. It had even happened that, when ſhe was pregnant, being diſguſted with the world, and frequently contemplating the picture, the fruit of her womb had contracted a reſemblance of that pious eremite, which had determined her to give him the name of Paul, in honour

honour of the ſaint who had led a life far from men who had ſeduced him, and afterwards abandoned him. Mary, receiving it from the hands of Paul, ſaid, with a trembling tone of voice, " My " brother, it ſhall never be taken " from me whilſt I live; and I " will never forget that you have " given me the only thing you " poſſeſſed in the world." At this tone of friendſhip, at this unhoped-for return of familiarity and tenderneſs, Paul would have embraced her, but, as nimble as a bird, ſhe fled from him, and left him aſtoniſhed, not being able to account for a conduct ſo extraordinary.

However,

However, Margaret ſaid to Madam de la Tour, " Why cannot we " marry our children? They are " enamoured with each other, and " are ignorant of its being love; " but, when nature ſhall ſpeak more " plainly to their hearts, it will be " in vain for us to prevent them; " every thing is to be feared." Madam de la Tour replied, " They " are too young, and too poor. " What diſtreſs for us, if Mary " ſhould bring into the world unhappy children, when, perhaps, " ſhe might not have ſtrength to " bring them up! Your black, Domingo, is in the decline of life; " Mary is infirm. Myſelf, for theſe " fourteen years paſt, have felt my " conſtitution breaking. Old age " quickly comes on in an hot

" country, and ſtill more ſo by
" trouble. Paul is our only hope.
" Let us wait till age has more ma-
" tured him, and then he may be
" able to ſupport us by his labour.
" At preſent, you know we have no
" great ſtore laid up, we have little
" more than neceſſaries for the day.
" But in ſending Paul to the Indies,
" he will procure, by trade, where-
" with to buy a ſlave; and on his
" return hither, we will marry him
" to Mary; for I believe no perſon
" can render my dear daughter ſo
" happy as your ſon Paul. We will
" ſpeak upon the ſubject to our
" neighbour."

They conſulted me, and I was of their opinion. " The Indian ſeas " (ſaid I) are pleaſant, if we take a " favourable

" favourable ſeaſon. To go to In-
" dia, 'tis only a voyage of ſix
" weeks at the moſt, and as long to
" return. We will make out a
" venture for him to take for us.
" Our neighbours love him; we will
" collect together our rough cotton,
" of which we make little uſe,
" for want of the neceſſary utenſils;
" alſo ſome ebony, which is ſo plen-
" tiful here; and gums, which run
" in the foreſt untouched: all theſe
" will ſell very well in India, and are
" needleſs for us."

I took upon me to obtain permiſſion of M. Bourdonaye to embark for the voyage, and particularly to inform Paul of it before-hand: but what was my aſtoniſhment, when this young man ſaid to me, in words

replete with ſenſe far above his years, " Wherefore do you wiſh " me to quit my family, for I know " not what chimerical project of " fortune? Is there any commerce " more advantageous than culti- " vating a field which yields us fifty " or an hundred fold? If we are de- " ſirous of trading, cannot we do it " by carrying our ſuperfluities to " the town of Port Louis, without " being obliged to go to the In- " dies? Our mothers tell me that " Domingo is infirm; but that I am " young, and increaſing in ſtrength " every day. There may happen " to them ſome accident during my " abſence, above all to Mary, who " is already ſuffering. Oh no, no! " I cannot reſolve to quit them."

His

His anſwer threw me into a great embarraſſment; for Madam de la Tour had not concealed from me the ſituation of Mary's mind, and the deſire ſhe had of gaining a few years on the age of the young people, by ſeparating them from each other. They were motives of which I did not dare give the moſt diſtant hints to Paul.

CHAP. XII.

A DECLARATION.

DURING theſe tranſactions, a ſhip arriving from France, brought Madam de la Tour a letter from her aunt. The fear of death (without which the moſt obdurate hearts would never feel any remorſe) had ſtruck her. She was ſeized with a diſorder which age had rendered incurable. She therefore ordered

dered her niece to return to France: but if her health would not permit her to undergo ſo long a voyage, ſhe enjoined her to ſend Mary, whom ſhe deſigned to have genteely educated, and bequeath her the whole of her fortune. She added, That ſhe expected, in return for her goodneſs, a full compliance with her injunctions.

Scarcely was this letter read in the family, than it ſpread a general conſternation. Domingo and Mary began to weep. Paul, petrified with amazement, appeared ready to give way to a ſudden guſt of paſſion. Mary, with her eyes fixed on her mother, durſt not utter a ſyllable. "Can you really quit us," ſaid Margaret to Madam de la Tour? "No,

" my friend; no, my children, (re-
" plied Madam de la Tour;) I will
" never quit you. I have lived
" with you, and with you I will die.
" In your friendſhip has been my
" only happineſs. If my health is
" deranged, former troubles are the
" cauſe. I have been wounded to
" the heart by the cruelty of my
" relations, and the loſs of my huſ-
" band. But ſince that period, I
" have experienced more conſolation
" and felicity with you, in theſe
" poor cottages, than ever I could
" have hoped from the riches of
" my family, in my own country."

At this diſcourſe, the tears of joy flowed from every eye. Paul embracing Madam de la Tour in his arms, ſaid to her, " I will never

" quit

" quit you. I will not go to the " Indies. We will all work for " you, dear mother; you ſhall want " for nothing with us." But of the whole ſociety, the perſon who teſtified the leaſt joy, and who was the moſt ſenſible of it, was Mary. She enjoyed a calm ſerenity the whole of the day; and the return of her tranquillity added to the general ſatisfaction.

The next day, at ſunriſe, as they had, according to cuſtom, juſt finiſhed their morning prayer before breakfaſt, Domingo informed them that a gentleman on horſeback, followed by two ſlaves, was advancing towards the habitation. 'Twas M. de la Bourdonaye. He entered the cottage, where the whole family

family was at breakfaſt. Mary was ſerving them with boiled rice. They had, for cups to drink out of, the halves of a callabaſh; and, for a table cloth, the leaves of a banana. The governor, at firſt, expreſſed his aſtoniſhment at the poverty of this abode. Then, addreſſing himſelf to Madam de la Tour, he told her, that general affairs prevented him ſometimes from thinking on particulars, but that ſhe had many claims upon him. "You have, "Madam, (added he,) an aunt in "France, a woman of quality, who "reſerves her whole fortune for "you, and expects you to repair "immediately to her." Madam de la Tour replied to the governor, that her health being on the decline, would not permit her to undertake

ſo

ſo long a voyage. " At leaſt, (ſaid
" M. de la Bourdonaye,) your daugh-
" ter, ſo young and ſo amiable, you
" cannot, without injuſtice, deprive
" of ſo great a ſucceſſion. I con-
" ceal nothing from you; your aunt
" hath obtained an order to oblige
" her to go to France. The govern-
" ment hath written to me on this
" ſubject, to make uſe of my power,
" if needful; but exerciſing it only
" for the happineſs of the inhabi-
" tants of this colony, I expect from
" your will alone, a ſacrifice of ſome
" years, upon which depends the
" eſtabliſhment of your daughter,
" and the welfare of your whole
" life. Why do people come to
" theſe colonies? Is it not to make
" a fortune? Would it not be more
" agreeable

" agreeable to obtain one in one's " own country?"

As he ſpoke theſe words, he placed upon the table a great bag of piaſtres, which one of his blacks had brought. " There " (added he) is what your aunt " hath intended for the neceſſary " preparations of your daughter's " voyage." He then concluded, by mildly blaming Madam de la Tour, for not applying to him in her need; but, at the ſame time, praiſed her noble ſpirit. Paul immediately caught the word, and ſaid to the governor, " Sir, my " mother did apply to you, and met " with a very ill reception." " Have you another child?" ſaid the governor to Madam de la Tour: " No,

" No, Sir, (ſaid ſhe;) this is the ſon
" of my friend; but he and Mary
" are quite common to us both, and
" equally dear."

" Young man, (ſaid the governor
" to Paul,) when you have acquired
" a knowledge of the world, you
" will know the misfortune of per-
" ſons in your ſituation; you will
" know how eaſy it is to ſupplant
" them, and how eaſily they give to
" intriguing vice, what belongs to
" concealed merit,"

M. de la Bourdonaye, invited by Madam de la Tour, ſeated himſelf at the table. He breakfaſted with them on coffee and boiled rice, after the manner of the inhabitants. He was charmed with the order and

propriety of the little cottage, with the union of thoſe two charming families, and with the zeal of their old domeſtics. " There are here " (ſaid he) only wooden materials; " but ſerene countenances, and " hearts of gold." Paul, charmed with the eaſy familiarity of the governor, ſaid to him, " I deſire " to be your friend; for you are an " honeſt man." M. de la Bourdonaye received with pleaſure this mark of ruſtic cordiality: he ſhook Paul by the hand, and aſſured him he might depend upon his friendſhip.

After having breakfaſted, he took Madam de la Tour aſide, and told her, that an opportunity would ſoon offer of ſending her daughter to

to France, in a ſhip which was in a ſhort time to ſail; that he would recommend her to a lady, a relation of his, who was a paſſenger; that ſhe ought to be careful to guard againſt loſing an immenſe fortune, for the ſatisfaction of a few years. "Your "aunt (added he) cannot ſurvive "more than two years. Her friends "have written to me to the ſame "purport. Conſider it well; people "do not get fortunes every day. "Every perſon of ſenſe will be of "my opinion." She anſwered, "That, wiſhing for no other happineſs than that of her daughter, "ſhe left her departure for France "entirely to his diſpoſal.

Madam de la Tour was not ſorry to find an opportunity of ſeparating Paul

Paul and Mary for ſome time, that ſhe might promote ſome future day their mutual happineſs. She therefore took her daughter aſide, and ſaid to her, " My child, our do-
" meſtics are old; Paul is very
" young; Margaret is advanced in
" age; and I am very infirm. If
" I ſhould die, what would become
" of you, without a fortune, in the
" midſt of theſe deſerts? You would
" be left here alone, having no per-
" ſon who could be any great aſ-
" ſiſtance to you, and obliged to
" labour for your ſupport, like a
" ſlave. The thought of this diſ-
" treſſes me." Mary replied,
" God hath condemned us to la-
" bour. You have taught me to
" work, and to bleſs him every day.
" Hitherto he hath not forſaken us.
" He

" He will never forſake us. His " providence watches particularly " over the unfortunate. You have " told me ſo many a time! I " cannot reſolve to quit you." Madam de la Tour, greatly moved, replied, " I have no other view " than to render you happy, and " to marry you one day with " Paul, who is not your brother. " Conſider that his fortune depends " upon you."

A young girl, who is in love, imagines every body is ignorant of it. She places over her eyes the veil ſhe has on her heart; but when it is raiſed by a friendly hand, then the ſecret pains of love eſcape her as through an open barrier, and the mutual overflowings of confidence

ſucceed that reſerve and myſtery which ſurrounded her.

Mary, ſenſible of theſe new proofs of the goodneſs of her mother, declared to her thoſe ſtruggles in her breaſt, to which God alone was witneſs; that ſhe ſaw the aſſiſting hand of his providence, in that of a tender mother, who approved of her attachment, and who directed her by her advice; that now, ſupported by her, every thing engaged her to remain with her, without uneaſineſs for the preſent, and without fear for the future.

Madam de la Tour, perceiving that her confidence had produced a contrary effect to what ſhe expected, ſaid to her, "My child, I will not

"preſs

" preſs you; deliberate at your
" leiſure; but conceal your love
" from Paul. When the heart of
" a young woman is caught, her
" lover has nothing more to aſk."

CHAP. XIII.

THE SECRET OF PAUL'S BIRTH REVEALED.

TOWARDS evening, as Madam de la Tour was alone with her daughter, a man, clothed in a blue caſſock, entered the cottage. 'Twas an eccleſiaſtical miſſionary of the iſland, and confeſſor to Madam de la Tour. He was ſent by the governor. "My children, (ſaid he,

he, as he entered,) " God be
" praiſed! How rich you are!
" You, who obey the dictates of
" your heart, by doing good to the
" poor. I know what M. de la
" Bourdonaye hath ſaid to you, and
" what you have anſwered. Good
" mother, your health obliges you
" to remain here; but you, young
" miſs, are without excuſe. It is
" our duty to obey Providence, and
" our aged parents, though unjuſt.
" It is a ſacrifice; nay, 'tis the com-
" mand of heaven. He devoted
" himſelf for us. We, according
" to his example, ſhould devote
" ourſelves for the good of our
" family. Your voyage to France
" will have a happy concluſion.
" Will you not go thither, my dear
" daughter?"

Mary, with downcaſt eyes, anſwered him, trembling, " If 'tis " the command of heaven, I ſubmit. " May his will be done." And ſhe burſt into tears.

The miſſionary departed, and gave an account to the governor of his ſucceſs. Meanwhile, Madam de la Tour ſent Domingo to intreat me to come and conſult with her upon the departure of Mary. I was not of opinion, that ſhe ſhould be ſuffered to go. I hold for ſure principles of happineſs, that the advantages of nature are to be preferred to thoſe of riches; and that we ought not to ſeek for that abroad, which we can find at home.

But

But what could my counſels of moderation effect againſt the allurements of a great fortune, or my natural reaſoning againſt the prepoſſeſſion of the world, and an authority looked upon by Madam de la Tour as ſacred? The good lady only conſulted me out of complaiſance, and no longer heſitated, after the deciſion of her confeſſor. Even Margaret (who, notwithſtanding the great advantages to her ſon, from the fortune of Mary, had ſtrongly oppoſed her departure,) no longer made objections.

As for Paul, he, ignorant of what was determined upon, and wondering at the frequent converſations of Madam de la Tour with her daugh-

ter, in ſecret, gave himſelf up to gloomy melancholy. " Something " is plotting againſt me, (ſaid " he,) by their ſecret proceed- " ings."

However, the report was ſoon ſpread through the iſland, that fortune had viſited theſe rocks: merchants, of every kind, were ſeen climbing the mountain, and diſplaying, in theſe poor cottages, ſattins, ſilks, muſlins, chints, buckles, rings, and, in ſhort, every thing the eaſtern world produced.

Madam de la Tour wiſhed that her daughter would buy whatever ſhe had an inclination for; while ſhe herſelf only paid attention to the qualities and prices, leſt the merchants

chants might cheat her. Mary choſe every thing which ſhe thought would be agreeable to her mother, to Margaret, and to Paul. At length the bag of piaſtres was made uſe of, which had not been thought of in her want. She then divided what ſhe had purchaſed between the family. This ſhe gave to her mother, that to Margaret, theſe to Mary and Domingo, and thoſe to Paul.

But he, afflicted at the ſight of theſe gifts of fortune, came to me a few days after, and told me, with an air of diſtreſs, "My ſiſter is "going away; ſhe hath already "made preparations for her voyage. "Make uſe of your influence over "the minds of our mothers to pre-

"vent her." I yielded to Paul, though well perſuaded that my repreſentatious would be in vain.

If Mary appeared charming in the blue coarſe cloth of Bengal, and a red handkerchief round her head, ſhe was quite otherwiſe when I ſaw her adorned after the faſhion of the eaſtern ladies. She was dreſſed in white muſlin, lined with roſe colour taffety. Her ſhape appeared to the greateſt advantage; her flaxen locks flowed on her ſhoulders. But her blue eyes were bedimed with melancholy; and heart, agitated by combating paſſions, gave an animated colour to her complexion, and ſounds full of emotion to her voice. Even the contraſt of her elegant clothing, which ſhe ſeemed

to

to wear againſt her inclination, rendered her languor ſtill more affecting. No perſon could ſee or hear her without being moved.

The melancholy of Paul increaſed. Margaret, afflicted at the ſituation of her ſon, ſaid to him one day in private, " Wherefore, my ſon, do " you cheriſh vain hopes, which ren- " der a ſeparation ſtill more diſ- " treſſing? It is now time that I " diſcover the ſecret of your life " and mine. Miſs de la Tour, by " her mother's ſide, is related to a " rich perſon of quality: but as for " you, you are only the ſon of a poor " peaſant; and what is worſe, you are " illegitimate."

At

At the word illegitimate Paul was aſtoniſhed. He had never before heard it pronounced: he aſked his mother the ſignification of it; who anſwered, " You have " had no lawful father. When I " was a young woman, I was guilty " of a weakneſs, through love, " of which you were the fruit. My " crime hath deprived you of the " knowledge of your father's fami- " ly, and my repentance of your " mother's. You have no other re- " lation in the world than me!" and ſhe began to weep. Paul, embracing her in his arms, ſaid, " Oh, " my mother! ſince I have no other " relation in the world than you, " I will love you the more. But " what ſecret have you juſt revealed " to me! I now ſee the reaſon why

" Mary

"Mary hath avoided me theſe two
"months paſt, and which hath de-
"termined her to depart. Ah!
"without doubt, ſhe deſpiſes me!"

The hour of ſupper arriving, they ſat themſelves at the table, the breaſt of each agitated with different paſſions. They eat little, and ſpoke not. Mary was the firſt who aroſe, and quitting the cottage, ſeated herſelf on this ſpot on which we now ſtand. Paul ſoon followed her, and ſeated himſelf by her. They both, for ſome time, kept a profound ſilence. It was one of thoſe delightful nights, ſo common within the tropics, the beauty of which the pencil of the moſt eminent maſter could never portray. The moon appeared as if ſurrounded by a curtain

tain of clouds, which her rays diſſipated by degrees. Her light ſpread inſenſibly over the mountains of the iſland, and their ſummits ſhone with a ſilvered green. The winds were calm; and the ſoft piping and gentle murmurs of the birds, (who were enjoying themſelves in their neſts, pleaſed with the clearneſs of the night, and the tranquillity of the air,) were heard in the woods, the vallies, and the hollows of the rocks. Every thing was joyful; even the inſects were humming on the graſs. The ſtars ſparkled in the heavens, and their rays reflected them in the boſom of the ſea.

Mary's eyes wandered with a look of diſtraction over the vaſt and

and gloomy horizon, diſtinguiſhed from the ſhore of the iſland by the fires of the fiſhermen dreſſing their food. At the entrance of the port ſhe ſaw a light and a ſhade. 'Twas the lantern and the body of the ſhip in which ſhe was to embark for Europe, which, ready to ſail, was riding at anchor waiting for the wind. At ſight of this ſhe was diſtreſſed, and turned aſide her head, leſt Paul ſhould ſee her weep.

Madam de la Tour, Margaret, and I, were ſeated at a diſtance, under ſome bananas; where we diſtinctly heard their converſation, which I ſhall never forget.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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